AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An interactive dialogue apparatus comprising:

at least one input port;

two or more output ports;

means for processing input responses to determine the semantic meaning thereof; ~~and~~

control means for determining a suitable output prompt to be output from at least one of said output ports in response to a received input ~~response;~~ response, wherein said output ports are respectively arranged to output output prompts of different types; ~~the apparatus further comprising~~ and

a first store storing input and output type data indicative of one or more properties of the input and output ports and/or the input responses and output prompts communicated ~~therethrough.~~therethrough;

wherein said input and output type data is updated when: i) any of said one or more properties change; and/or ii) output prompts are sent; and/or iii) input responses are received.

2. (Currently Amended) An interactive dialogue apparatus comprising:

two or more input ports;

at least one output port;

means for processing input responses received at one or more of said input ports to determine the semantic meaning thereof; ~~and~~

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control means for determining a suitable output prompt to be output from said output port in response to a received input ~~response;~~response, wherein said input ports are respectively arranged to receive input responses of different types; ~~the apparatus further comprising~~ and

a first store storing input and output type data indicative of one or more properties of the input and ~~Output~~ output ports and/or the input responses and output prompts communicated ~~therethrough.~~ therethrough; wherein said input and output type data is updated when: i) any of said one or more properties change; and/or ii) output prompts are sent; and/or iii) input responses are received.

3. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 2. and further ~~comprising~~ comprising:

at least one additional output port,

wherein said control means is further arranged to determine a suitable output prompt to be output from at least one of said output ports in response to a received input response; and

wherein said output ports are respectively arranged to output output prompts of different types.

4. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, ~~wherein~~ wherein:

for any particular received input prompt, output prompts which are semantically synonymous or which mutually contribute towards a single semantic message independent of type are output from two or more of the output ports.

5. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein each input or output port is adapted to connect to one or more input or output devices via respective device gateways.

6. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein one of said properties is the ~~utilisation~~ utilization made by a user of each input and output port.

7. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein one of said properties is the connection of appropriate input or output devices to each of said input or output ports.

8. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to according to claim 1, wherein one of said properties is user preference value for each of said input and output ports.

9. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to according to claim 1, wherein one of said properties is device property data of input or output devices connected to said input or output ports.

10. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to according to claim 1, ~~wherein~~ wherein:

one of said properties is implementation data indicative of: whether an output prompt has been implemented in each output prompt ~~type;~~ type and/or input parse rules for each input response type.

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11. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to according to claim 1, wherein one of said properties is type-supported data indicative of whether the apparatus is capable of receiving and/or outputting input responses and/or output prompts of each type.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the update of said data comprises instantiating new data structures to store the values of said changed properties, and storing said previous data to give a historical record of said data.

14. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said input and output type data further includes timing data indicative of the timings of changes in said one or more properties.

15. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said input and output type data comprises a single data entry for each input and output type, the value taken by a particular data entry being dependent on previous values of any one or more of that or other data entries.

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16. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, ~~comprising~~ further comprising:

a second store data defining a dialogue to be held with a user, and dialogue progression conditions which must be met to allow a user to progress through the dialogue, at least some of said conditions involving the stored input and output type data.

17. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, and further ~~comprising~~ comprising:

a second store storing data defining a dialogue model comprising an initial state, a plurality of subsequent states, possible transitions between said states, and for each transition at least one associated condition to be satisfied before that transition is deemed allowable, at least some of said conditions involving the stored input and output type data.

18. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the second store comprises a plurality of distributed storage media.

19. (currently amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, and further ~~comprising~~ comprising:

port control means for controlling the connections of input or output devices to said input or output ports in response to the stored input and output type data.

20. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, and further ~~comprising~~ comprising:

means for generating output prompts, said means being operable to generate output prompts adapted for particular output ports in dependence on the stored input and output type data.

21. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said first store comprises a plurality of distributed storage media each logically interconnected.

22. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the different types of output prompts or input responses comprise audio prompts or responses, or visual prompts or responses, or motor prompts or responses, in any combination thereof.

23. (Currently Amended) An interactive dialogue method comprising:

receiving input responses at least one input port;

processing the input responses to determine the semantic meaning thereof; ~~and~~

determining a suitable output prompt to be output from at least one of two or more output ports in response to a received input ~~response;~~response, wherein said output ports are respectively arranged to output output prompts of different types; ~~the method further comprising:~~ and

storing input and output data indicative of one or more properties of the input and output ports and/or the input responses and output prompts communicated ~~therethrough.~~therethrough;

wherein said input and output type data is updated when: i) any of said one or more

properties change; and/or ii) output prompts are sent; and/or iii) input responses are received.

24. (Currently Amended) An interactive dialogue method comprising:

receiving input responses at least one or more input ports;

processing the input responses received at one or more of said input ports to determine

the semantic meaning thereof; ~~and~~

determining a suitable output prompt to be output from an output port in response to a

received input ~~response~~response, wherein said input ports are respectively arranged to receive

input responses of different types; ~~the method further comprising:~~ and

storing input and output data indicative of one or more properties of the input and output

ports and/or the input responses and output prompts communicated ~~therethrough.~~therethrough,

wherein said input and output type data is updated when: i) any of said one or more

properties change; and/or ii) output prompts are sent; and/or iii) input responses are received.

25. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 24, wherein said determining

step ~~is further arranged to determine~~ determines a suitable output prompt to be output from at

least one of a plurality of output ports in response to a received input response; and wherein said

output ports are respectively arranged to output output prompts of different types.

26. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 23, wherein for any particular

received input prompt, output prompts which are semantically synonymous or which mutually

contribute towards a single semantic message independent of type are output from two or more of the output ports.

27. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 23, further ~~comprising~~ comprising:

connecting any one or more of the input or output ports to one or more input or output devices via respective device gateways.

28. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 23, wherein one of said properties is the ~~utilisation~~ utilization made by a user of each input and output port.

29. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 23, wherein one of said properties is the connection of appropriate input or output devices to each of said input or output ports.

30. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 23, wherein one of said properties is a user preference value for each of said input and output ports.

31. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 23, wherein one of said properties is device property data of input or output devices connected to said input or output ports.

32. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 23, wherein one of said properties is implementation data indicative of whether an output prompt has been implemented in each output prompt type.

33. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 23, wherein one of said properties is type-supported data indicative of whether the apparatus is capable of receiving and/or outputting input responses and/or output prompts of each type.

34. (Cancelled)

35. (Currently Amended) A method according to ~~claim 34~~ claim 23, wherein the update of said data comprises instantiating new data structures to store the values of said changed properties, and storing said previous data to give a historical record of said data.

36. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 23, wherein said input and output type data further includes timing data indicative of the timings of changes in said one or more properties.

37. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 23, ~~wherein~~ wherein:

said input and output type data comprises a single data entry for each input and output type, the value taken by a particular data entry being dependent on previous values of any one or more of that or other data entries.

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38. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 23, and further ~~comprising~~ comprising:

storing data defining a dialogue to be held with a user, and dialogue progression conditions which must be met to allow a user to progress through the dialogue, at least some of said conditions involving the stored input and output type data.

39. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 23, and further ~~comprising~~ comprising:

storing data defining a dialogue model comprising an initial state, a plurality of subsequent states, possible transitions between said states, and for each transition at least one associated condition to be satisfied before that transition is deemed allowable, at least some of said conditions involving the stored input and output type data.

40. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 38, wherein said data defining the dialogue model is stored on a plurality of storage media each of which is logically interconnected.

41. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 23, and further ~~comprising~~ comprising:

controlling the connections of input or output devices to said input or output ports in response to the stored input and output type data.

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42. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 23, and further ~~comprising~~ comprising:

~~the step of~~ generating output prompts adapted for particular output ports in dependence on the stored input and output type data.

43. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 23, wherein said input and output type data is stored on a plurality of distributed storage media.

44. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 23, wherein the different types of output prompts or input responses comprise audio output prompts or input responses, or visual output prompts or input responses, or motor outer prompts or input responses, in any combination thereof.

45. (Currently Amended) A computer storage medium containing a computer program or suite of programs so arranged such that when executed on a computer the program or programs cause the computer to perform an interactive dialogue method according to claim 23.

46. (Currently Amended) A computer storage medium containing a computer program or suite of programs so arranged such that when loaded into a computer it or they renders the computer an apparatus according to claim 1.

47. (Cancelled)

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